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Toscanini and his
Father's Recordings**

by James Lyons



Enrico Caruso
Lives Again in his Recordings

CARUSO

CARUSO—An Anthology of his Art on Records. RCA Victor set LM-6127, 3 discs, \$11.94.

Side 1 (All Verdi): *Aida*—Celeste *Aida*; *La Traviata*—Brindisi (with Alma Gluck); *Il Trovatore*—Di quella pira and Ai nostri monti (with Schumann-Heink); *La Forza del Destino*—Solenne in quest' ora (with Scotti); *Rigoletto*—Questa o quella; *La donna è mobile*, and *Rigoletto*—Quartet (with Galli-Curci, Perini, and De Luca).

Side 2 (Verdi and Donizetti): *Macbeth*—Ah! la paterna mano; *Otello*—Sì per ciel (with Ruffo); *Lombardi*—Trio (with Alda and Journet); *L'Elisir d'amore*—Una furtiva lagrima (Verse 1) and *Venti scudi* (with De Luca); *Don Sebastian*—Deserto in terra; *Lucia*—Sextet (with Galli-Curci, Egner, Bada, De Luca).

Side 3: *Manon Lescaut*—Donna non vidi mai; *La Bohème*—Che gelida manina and O soave fanciulla (with Farrar); *Tosca*—Recondita armonia; *Madama Butterfly*—Ve lo dissi (with Scotti); *Fedora*—Amor ti vieta (Giordano); *La Gioconda*—Cielo e mar (Ponchielli); *Pagliacci*—Vesti la giubba (Leoncavallo).

Side 4: *Carmen*—Air de la fleur (Bizet); *Manon*—Aria Act III (Massenet); *L'Africana*—O paradiso (Meyerbeer); *Le Cid*—O Souverain (Massenet); *La Juive*—Rachel! Quand du Seigneur (Halevy); *Maria*—M'appari and *Quartet Act II* (with Alda, Jacoby and Journet).

Side 5: *Xerxes*—Ombra mai fu (Handel); *Les deux serénades* (with Elman)(Leoncavallo); *Amadis*—Bois épais (Lully); *Feneste che lucive* (Anon.); *Vaghiissima sembianza* (Donaudy); *Noche feliz* (Posados); *La Partida* (Alvarez); *A la luz de la luna* (with de Gorgoz).

Side 6: *O sole mio* (Capua); *Vieni sul mar* (Anon.); *Luna fedel* (Denza); *Over There* (Cohan); *La Campana di San Giusto* (Arona); *Sei morta nella vita mia* (Costa); *Luna d'estate* (Tosti); *Messe Solennelle*—Crucifixus (Rossini).

▲BEHIND this project of re-recording 46 selections out of the 240 that Enrico Caruso made for Victor and HMV has gone considerable thought and care. Mr. Marek, Director of Artists and Repertoire for RCA Victor Records, tells us that the choice of selections was governed by the endorsement of the singer himself during his lifetime. Estimates of his own performances on records were written by Caruso on his paychecks. One should not assume by this that these are the only recordings that Caruso endorsed as first-rate examples of his artistry. The selections exclude many of these, unfortunately, because existent masters were not in the best condition to obtain desired results. Hence, displeasure should not prevail among listeners who lament many fine recordings left out in this collection. What has happened in this set is a rehabilitation of these 46 recordings of Caruso's voice as a result of new engineering processes. The famous voice emerges more realistically in most cases than I ever heard it before, and the old orchestral accompaniments take on a new and more believable sound albeit with some resul-

tant diverse effects in balance. Naturally, some records here sound better than others and those that do, compared to originals, have to my ears the greater reality. The selections cover the period 1902-1920. They are not, however, presented chronologically, though the dates are given, for—as Mr. Marek says—“we felt that presentation by dates would make unsatisfactory long-play listening.” I think many will disagree with Mr. Marek's contention.

As a stylist, Caruso grew with the years, even as he did as an actor. Your reviewer heard him from 1909 to his last performance on December 24, 1920, and though very young in the beginning your reviewer remembers him vividly in almost every opera attended. In the period from 1917 to 1920, having entered my twenties, I was better able to appreciate and assess his artistry. He was a knowing musician if not a faithful one; he treated words as he felt them and voiced all so that one could understand them. My enthusiasm for this set tempts me to be over-indulgent, but this derives from the many memories that have been awakened in listening to those records of arias that I heard the noted tenor sing more than once in person. To my ears, his voice from many of these records is recalled in a manner that makes him seem among us again today.

Let me cite those excerpts that represent the tenor in sound as I recall his voice in the opera house. From Side 1, the duet with Schumann-Heink from *Il Trovatore*, the two *Rigoletto* arias and, if not quite as realistically, the duet with Scotti from *La Forza del Destino*. From Side 2, the Trio with Alda and Journet from *I Lombardi*, the early *Una furtiva lagrima* (which is unfortunately incomplete though Part 2 exists), and the aria from *Don Sebastian*. From Side 3, the *Manon Lescaut* aria, the *Tosca* aria, and the tenor's famous *Vesti la giubba* from *Pagliacci*. (I must have heard him sing Canio a dozen times.) From Side 4, the

Manon aria, the *La Juive* aria (one of the last recordings that he made) and that perfect quartet from *Martha* with Alda, Jacoby and Journet. (I heard these artists often in this opera.) From Sides 5 and 6, I cannot honestly say that I heard the tenor in person sing any of these songs—some of which were very dear to his heart. Most of these were made late in his career, revealing a weightiness in tonal production, while others find him singing with the ease that characterizes his earlier selections. The sounds here vary, after a heavy-voiced but realistic reproduction of the voice in the aria from Handel's *Xerxes* (made in 1920) we hear a strangely veiled voice in the next selection—*Les deux Sérénades* by Leoncavallo. A wonderful example of the tenor's voice is the *Feneste che lucive*, made in 1913. Mrs. Dorothy Caruso regarded Costa's *Sei morta nella vita mia*, on side 6, as the most “faithful reproduction of his voice.” To be sure, it is fine yet *Feneste che lucive* is also a faithful reproduction of his voice at a more youthful sounding period. These later recordings do not have the flexibility of his earlier ones. It is a pity that more of his earlier Neapolitan songs could not have been re-recorded. This album does not exhaust the Caruso repertory and, I hope, the present generation's response to it will be sufficient to warrant another similarly recorded disc or two. —P.H.R.

HANDEL AT HIS BEST

HANDEL: *Semele*; William Herbert (Jupiter), George Prangnell (Cadmus), John Whitworth (Athamas), George James (Sommus), Robert Ellis (Apollo), Anna Pollak (Juno), Brenda Griffith (Iris), Jennifer Vyvyan (Semele), Helen Watts (Ino), with St. Anthony Singers' Thurston Dart (harpsichord), Thomas Goff (harpsichord) and New Symphony Orchestra of London, conducted by Anthony Lewis. Oiseau Lyre OL-50098-100, 3 discs, \$14.94.

▲THERE is some question as to the proper classification of Handel's work—“alter'd from the *Semele* of Mr. William Congreve,” according to the original title page. We are told that Congreve intended his text as an opera libretto, but its undramatic quality turned it rather into a dramatic oratorio. So little does the poet's work seem to count with the sponsors of this recording that his name is nowhere mentioned on jackets or labels. There are no program notes, but only the text. If we were to hazard a guess that such a non-opera as this would make ideal recording material we would be absolutely correct; for sheer and sustained musical distinction I doubt if Handel ever bettered the score. One knows the title

(Continued on page 129)

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RIVERDALE PROJECT

The Story of Walter Toscanini and his Father's Recordings

By James Lyons



Walter Toscanini and the tape library. (Photo by Allan Turoff)

▲FOR nearly two decades now, your editor has counted Walter Toscanini among his valued friends—a friend who was all too infrequently encountered because he, too, was involved in affairs of the professional world. His indefatigable efforts to overcome his father's aversion to reproduced music have long been familiar to us and they add up to a story that we have often desired to expound, but because of our long association with the Toscanini family our point of view seemed lacking in sufficient objectivity to do it justice. So we requested our close associate, James Lyons, to write this interesting story of a son's devotion to the preservation of his father's artistry.

—The Editor.

IN THE deepest recesses of a secluded old mansion, to all outward appearances as tranquil as the wide Hudson that flows far below, skilled engineers are documenting a glorious chapter of our

within its corporate limits the magnificently Italianate edifice known to those who are welcome there as the Villa Paulina.

No nameplate adorns the gate at the street end of the long driveway, but proud neighbors are quick to disclose that it is the home of Arturo Toscanini.

Even to those few intimates who enjoy the run of the house, one area has been "off limits" for the past several months. This is the billiard room, an oval-ceilinged chamber directly beneath the two-story grand foyer that is the geographic center of the luxurious labyrinth.

It is there, in soundproofed isolation, that RP has been proceeding—the reconstruction, more properly the bringing back to life, of nearly every performance ever given by the late NBC Symphony Orchestra under the great man upstairs for whom this perfect instrument had been created.

A son's devotion to his father can be a powerful thing, particularly when the parent commands universal respect. Walter Toscanini has been an incalculable force over the years both at home and abroad, and more especially in the golden twilight of The Maestro's distinguished career. Always ubiquitous, always anonymous, he prefers—like other children who have revered the artistry of their famous parents—to remain an unknown quantity. He professes to be no hero and shuns the limelight. He was even reluctant to have this story told, and only after much urging did he consent.

Be that as it may, it is he and his faithful associates whom posterity must thank for the preservation of the unique Toscanini art in its final flowering—The Maestro's seventeen years with the NBC Symphony.

It was Walter who conceived RP, and Walter who made it a reality—and he, indeed, who has been the record enthusiast's advocate through the decades in which his father concerned himself solely

with the ultimate realization of the music at hand, here and now, to be treasured only for the moment and then consigned to tender memory.

Walter was barely six years old when he developed his abiding interest in records and their reproduction. No less than Enrico Caruso had presented the Toscaninis with a long-horned monster of a phonograph, along with a complete collection of his first recordings. This was in 1904. Walter played those recordings over and over, somewhat to the discomfiture of the household. Then, as now, Milan like its music live.

Later, he discovered a shop operated by Pathé in the Galleria Vittorio Emanuele, off the Cathedral Square, where he could don earphones and hear the recordings of the other famous singers. The price of this pleasure was 10 centesimi—at that time quite a dent in Walter's allowance. For this sum one could purchase ten cigarettes.

After the advent of electrical recording, in 1925, Walter tried many times to record his father's La Scala rehearsals, using an early electrical outfit of La Voce del Padrone, but never with much success. It was the same story throughout the Beethoven Centennial in 1927. These experiments were perforce clandestine. Nor did he dare expose any of the results to the ears of The Maestro.

Shortly after coming to America in 1938, Walter joined the RCA Victor organization with a view of learning the business from the bottom up—he was not averse to an apprenticeship in the shipping department, learning how to pack records, before moving on to learn how to make them.

This experience was to prove valuable sooner than anyone expected. His father having refused to approve a number of releases that seemed to everybody else satisfactory, several Victor officials made



Walter Toscanini as a boy of seven

cultural history for the unbelieving ages to come.

This is "Riverdale Project"—hereinafter RP—the title being an allusion to the Manhattan suburb that contains

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bold to invoke Walter's intercession. He agreed to do what he could, but knew he would have to go about it with the utmost care. His father was opposed to recordings, despite the fact that he had already made several for charitable purposes that met with public approval. It was essential that he make his father understand that a record should not be compared with live music, that it was only a facsimile like a photograph or a painting of a person or thing. But this would be no easy task, for The Maestro, lacking engineering knowledge, was impatient with mechanical contrivances and unwilling to accept their limitations.

Realizing that the phonograph his father had been using was not capable of reproducing all that was in the record, much less what his father expected to hear from it—no commercial machine could in those days—he consulted René Sneyvangers, of the RCA Victor engineering research department.

Pre hi-fi Equipment

With his help, there was soon installed a new outfit that comprised three batteries of four speakers each deployed at three different locations around the Toscanini living room to give The Maestro the effect of being surrounded by his own orchestra. Of great importance was the professional turntable that maintained constant speed, because Walter's father was super-sensitive to the slightest pitch variation. On this turntable unit was mounted a professional tone arm in which was installed an FM pickup, with its own special preamplifier, the finest unit of its kind at that time. Also, Mr. Sneyvangers rebuilt a special RCA Victor amplifier to accommodate the load of the twelve speakers without distortion.

With this impressive system, pre hi-fi but a decided improvement over any home reproduction to be had in that era, Walter was able to win an *imprimatur* for fully three-quarters of the accumulated recording rejections.

Nevertheless, after long years as an adamant foe of the phonograph, The Maestro inevitably chose the wide-open circuit (which meant maximal surface noise no matter what else) whenever he auditioned his own recordings. This continues to be the case, and there is no fooling his incredibly sensitive ears. As recently as this past season, apropos of his newly remastered Beethoven symphonies, the many different enhancements on this or that curve were passed over in favor of the original sound. The Maestro dislikes the addition of any artificial reverberation; for him, it "confuses" the purity of the orchestral tone.

By way of illustration, Walter tells of the evening that the family spent at the radio, listening to a German opera broadcast. His father grew more and more impatient with the sound, finally exclaimed

in anger that even if his life depended on writing down the orchestral score from what he heard it would be impossible for him to do so. Cellos sounded like basses, and both violas and flutes like violins. Accustomed to listening from the proximity of a podium, The Maestro was shocked by the lack of instrumental definition. To this day it is anathema to him.

Needless to say, it was quite a while before Victor was able to please the elder Toscanini more or less consistently in sonic matters. At least there was the consolation that when he had given his approval to a recording it had passed a more severe test than the most formidable that any critics could contrive. Also, of course, RCA's constant striving to meet The Maestro's standards was excellent practice for the forthcoming age of high fidelity.

The genesis of RP, more understandable against this background of Walter's lifelong interest in the phonograph, can be traced specifically to his dreadful discovery, in 1950, that certain priceless acetates had begun to deteriorate. That, and the fortuitously simultaneous miracle of tape recording, which was just then supplanting wire methods. As usual, Walter had acquired one of the first models on the market. Quickly he satisfied himself that tape augured new horizons for musical reproduction. Why not, he reasoned, transfer all acetates of his father's performances to tape before the lacquer spoliation—by some chemical reaction not yet arrestable—rendered them useless?

To the Rescue

At once he got his tedious job under way, selecting first the astonishing number of discs that were in advanced stages of deterioration. There seemed to be no casual relationship between time and tide; some of the 1936 acetates were in perfect condition while others, very recently cut, were almost beyond the pale. But all were transferred.

For the high purpose of RP, this was only the beginning.

The converted billiard room—fondly referred to as the Underground Recording Company by Walter and his engineering associates—is the bottom-most in the entire establishment, reachable from the house proper only by a steep rear stairway. By a circuitous route it may be reached also via the basement, which has a separate entrance. Electing the latter alternative has covered RP with a real air of mystery. The domestic staff knows that something is going on down there, but what?

As of last July, when the RP personnel became three, the answer has been plenty.

A blanket of tableaux depicting the legend of Rip Van Winkle fills the billiard

room ceiling. Beneath it, instead of gaming tables, stand dozens of massive and miniature machines, serried in all directions. To enter this place unannounced, through the sliding doors that seal it off from the stairway, is to be startled by a mélange of jumping dials, whirring reels, and sometimes shattering sonics.

In one corner, the quiet corner, you will see the huge library—up to a dozen tapes, from all sources, of each Toscanini performance back to the début of the NBC Symphony on Christmas Eve, 1937 (and even beyond that to The Maestro's last seasons with the New York Philharmonic).

Why "from all sources"? Because none of the acetates was perfect, so that Walter had to make it his business to round up spares wherever he could, aware that a passage that failed to come across on this pressing would be crystal-clear on that. He got them from RCA, from NBC, from private individuals who had recorded off the air—and rehearsals were just as happily received as finished performances.

Legitimate Links

At that, some of the tapes now readied for release have enlisted entirely different performances of the same piece in addition to rehearsals.

Is not an element of artistic counterfeit implicit in all of this? Not on your life. The Maestro still must approve the finished tape, and his ears are no less acute than ever they were.

Aside from Walter, the lesser Merlins involved in this sonic sorcery are John Corbett, for years a network recording engineer before he went to work at Riverdale, and Richard Gardner, an RCA ace now on indefinite assignment *chez* Toscanini.

Every brand name in the audio industry is represented in the mass of equipment at their disposal, but it might not be untoward to mention that an amplifier designed by David Sarsar, formerly of the NBC's second violins, is employed on those frequent occasions when a tape has to be piped upstairs for auditioning—Sarsar knows his old boss as well as he knows his engineering, and his modified Williamson circuit is the only one thus far that has made Toscanini's orchestra sound to him as he remembers it.

Just what is involved in preparing these historic performances for the commercial market? Take the concert of Oct. 29, 1938. It included a Haydn symphony, the *Pathétique*, and the *Brandenburg Concerto in F*. The longer works had been performed several times and there was no lack of tapes for the most exact matching. But never before that date, and never again, did the NBC Symphony play that particular Bach. And it happened that only one recording was extant. So that

Walter and his assistants had nothing to work with but a single acetate, taken off the network line, and even that lone disc had been in bad shape when he taped it, which was in March of 1953.

When the time came to study this performance for possible re-issue, Walter was inclined to forget the whole thing. Sonically it was a horror, not to mention a hideously loud and recurrent crack that had resulted from a deep scratch in the lacquer. Still, Bernard Baker's trumpet solo had been a phenomenal show of artistry, and Walter could not in conscience let the problem drop.

After some little soul-searching he, Gardner, and Corbett rolled up their sleeves and painstakingly got to splicing out the deadly thwack and a few audience sneezes, coughs, and such. Before they were done the tape was a welter of patches—well over a hundred of them in less than eight minutes of music. But it sounded perfect, and it timed out at a fraction under two seconds shorter than the original. Now it is ready for production, devoid of even those tiny telltale clicks that are evidence of "conducting in the cutting room."

If an eight-minute performance occupied the three men for as many weeks, you can imagine how long it has taken to process a handful of the standard-length works. And alas, some of those that remain may not be started at all. No aggregate of good acetates has been found for the Shostakovich *Seventh*, just for instance, and a few bars still are missing from the total available *Salome's Dance*.

Also, one concert apparently was not recorded by anybody. This was a day-

time Junior League benefit on April 19, 1941. All but one of the works on that program were performed at other times, luckily. But the world will never again hear Toscanini's conception of the Overture to Tchaikovsky's *Voyevoda*—that is, not unless somebody comes forward with a decent acetate. We may be grateful that this fate did not befall some more worthy music.

For legal reasons, it is highly dubious that we will be hearing certain other Toscanini tapes, either—like that of the Brahms *Double Concerto* he made with Mischel Piastro and Alfred Wallenstein, then a cellist, on Feb. 17, 1935. Several performances of this period repose in the Riverdale library, and there they will undoubtedly stay. For the Philharmonic years are another chapter of this story, and long since history.

The NBC years may have ended with The Maestro's formal retirement, but they are destined to be re-lived as long as there are ears to listen and to marvel.

In 1956 alone we will be having the Kodaly *Hary Janos* Suite of Nov. 29, 1947; the Mozart *Symphony No. 39* of March 4, 1948; the Berlioz *Harold in Italy* of Nov. 29, 1953; the Cherubini *Requiem* of Feb. 18, 1950; the Schumann *Rhenish* of Nov. 12, 1949; and the Strauss *Don Quixote* of Nov. 22, 1951. These are scheduled right now. Others ready for release include such rarities as the delicious Haydn *Sinfonia Concertante* of March 6, 1948.

Who could ever forget these performances? The answer to that, thanks to Walter Toscanini, is nobody.

because of the two very famous arias—*Oh sleep, why dost thou leave me?* and *Where'er you walk*—but these are not the only familiar moments in the work. *Endless pleasure, Leave me, loathsome light* and *Hymen haste* are not unknown (though the last named is omitted in this recording); others deserve comparable fame. There are many felicities of construction and of orchestration—the prelude to the third act, for example, in which the bassoons doubling the cellos gives a marvelously somnolent effect. Textually *Semele* may be described as "quaint," and perhaps it is this quality that has stood in the way of its fame. But such considerations should not matter in a work so crowded with gems.

The performance is surely among the best so far accorded any major Handel work on records. Chorus and orchestra perform with infectious spirit under the guidance of Mr. Lewis; the balance is unusually good in the choral parts, for everything is clear and distinct, the orchestra full and assertive enough, though it is not a big group. The continuo is elaborately realized, a fact brought strongly to the attention in the *Oh sleep* aria. The soloists are never less than competent, sometimes considerably more than that. The finest voice is that of Helen Watts, a contralto new to me, though Jennifer Vyvyan surpasses herself, performing with considerable brilliance. Herbert sings in a forthright manner, without the tenderness that can make *Where'er you walk* so moving, and with a tone that sometimes borders on hoarseness. The counter-tenor John Whitworth shows good style as well as pleasing tone; his voice blends attractively in the trio *Why dost thou thus untimely grieve*. The singing of George Prangnell is on the wooden side. The score is generously cut.

—P.L.M.

HANDEL: *Sosarme*; Alfred Deller (Sosarme), William Herbert (Haliarte), Nancy Evans (Erenice), Margaret Ritchie (Elmira), John Kentish (Argone), Helen Watts (Melo), Ian Wallace (Altomaro), and Saint Anthony Singers with Saint Cecilia Orchestra, Thurston Dart (harpsichord) and Terence Weil (cello), conducted by Anthony Lewis. Oiseau Lyre OL-50091-93, 3 discs, \$14.94.

▲BETWEEN the years 1711, when he produced *Rinaldo*, and 1741, when he gave the world *Deidamia*, Handel composed forty-one Italian operas for London. *Sosarme*, dating from 1732, belongs to a period of transition, for it was that same year that saw the first of the long series of oratorios that were to crown his brilliant career. It seems strange that so long and weighty a work as *Sosarme*, a work so crammed with stately arias, duets and choruses, not to mention the truly noble recitative that holds all these things to-



The three Merlins: left to right, Walter Toscanini, John Corbett and Richard Gardner (Photo by Albert Guida)

gether, should have been remembered all these years for but one aria. *Rend'li sereno al ciglio*, masterpiece though it is, is by no means all the opera contains. With all the care that has so obviously gone into the preparation of this really splendid performance, it seems strange that we are not given any introductory notes at all. Only the text itself, with translation, is provided to orient us.

Chief credit for the success of the production must, of course, go to Anthony Lewis, who conducts with a firm and vital beat, getting good solid tone from the not too large chorus and orchestra. The vocal soloists inevitably work against odds in such taxing music as this; we can only bow in wonder and admiration at their achievement. Interest centers on Alfred Deller, the well-known counter-tenor, who here assumes the title role, written for a *castrato*. His style is characteristically intimate, and so it remains in the recitatives, though he sings out quite impressively in some of the arias and duets. Margaret Ritchie lends distinction to the role of Elmira, though there is evidence in some of the large-scale arias that a bigger voice than hers is really called for. *Dile pace*, for example, is written in the grand manner; while the singer manages the divisions with impressive skill, one feels she is giving absolutely all she has in tone. She is well recorded, which has not always been her lot in other sets. As in *Semele*, Helen Watts stands out with her impressive contralto voice and delivery; Nancy Evans, even more than Miss Ritchie, is working against natural odds, though she too has an excellent sense of style. She is not quite as proficient as her colleagues in the many florid passages she has to sing. John Kentish shows a serviceable lyric tenor voice; his rather impetuous style is probably intended to contrast with the other characters in the drama, but it leads him past the bounds of vocal security. William Herbert is in better voice than he is in *Semele*; Ian Wallace is tonally admirable and stylistically reserved. There are extensive cuts in the course of the performance. Although the singers are all English, and I cannot doubt an Italian would be conscious of their foreign accents, without exception they compensate with their comprehension of what they have to sing.

—P.L.M.

OPERA SPOTLIGHT

DONIZETTI: *La Favorita* (Opera in 4 Acts); Giulietta Simionato (Leonora); Gianni Poggi (Fernando); Ettore Bastianini (King Alfonso); Jerome Hines (Baldassare); Piero Di Palma (Don Gasparo); Bice Magnini (Inez); Orchestra and Chorus of the Maggio Musicale Fiorentino conducted by Alberto Erede. London set XLLA-39, 3 discs, \$14.94.

THE SAME—Highlights from the Opera: Vittoria Garafalo (Leonore); Dino Formichini (Fernando); Otello Borogonovo (King Alfonso); Paolo Washington (Baldassare); Silvana Zanolli (Inez); Angelo Mercuriali (Don Gasparo); Orchestra and Chorus conducted by Glauco Curiel. Angel 35322, \$4.98 or \$3.48.

▲DONIZETTI wrote his *La Favorita*, or *Favorita* as it soon became, to a French text in 1840 for the Paris Opéra. It was one of his most successful scores with a final act which is perhaps the most dramatic that he ever wrote. Like all his operas, *La Favorita* is a vehicle for fine singers and its long success during the 19th century was due to the famous artists of the times who "favored" it. Despite the improvements in higher forms of operatic art with the advent of Verdi, Wagner and others, the gratifying vocal writing of Donizetti for great singers has long retained its hold on the public. *La Favorita* still holds the stage in Italy, and the leading artists of each succeeding generation are heard there in this opera.

La Favorita is closely allied to Verdi's *La Traviata*, being the story of a courtesan of the 14th century who wished to marry and become an honest woman. The mistress of King Alfonso XI of Castile, she is helped by the church in her desires, but social intrigue makes for unavoidable tragedy. In the opera house, *La Favorita* can be and has been made a dreary vehicle, particularly when old-fashioned stage business prevails. It makes for good listening on records, however, notably in the London set where most of its fine arias and splendid ensembles for the principals are so tellingly sung. As a sampling of the score, the Angel disc has much in its favor from a group of young male singers, but the mezzo-soprano, heard as Leonora, with her vocal uncertainties and excessive vibrato spoils an otherwise acceptable recording of its kind for me. Moreover, the excerpts from the final act give us scant idea of why Toscanini would say "in the last act every note is a masterpiece." Dino Formichini, however, sings *Spirto gentil* better than does Gianni Poggi.

Simionato is magnificent as Leonora. Where required her vocal richness is most impressive. Her Leonora is the finest demonstration of her dramatic artistry yet to come to records. Donizetti has served his four principals handsomely in song and at least three of the four here make the most of their opportunities. Bastianini may not be in the tradition of the suave baritones of the past—Battistini, Ancona, Stracciari and others—but his virile baritone matched by his dramatic intensity give credence to his portrayal of the King. Hines is splendid as Baldassare, the Father Superior of the Monastery who defies the King. Poggi is hardly in the class of the great Fernandos, or for

that matter his three leading associates. His singing is uneven, often tight and more frequently than not colorless. His *Spirto gentil* is lusty-lunged and somewhat forced.

Alberto Erede does well by the orchestral proceedings; but, after all, Donizetti did not tax his conductors. Erede is aware of the orchestra's part in those several dramatic ensembles and firmly rises to the occasion. If his overture seems tepid, blame it on the composer—it isn't much of an overture. The recording is handsome in sound as realistic as one could ask, though sometimes the singers seem too close to their microphones.

—P.H.R.

FLOTOW: *Marta*; Elena Rizzieri (Lady Harriet), Pia Tassinari (Nancy), Ferruccio Tagliavini (Lionel), Carlo Tagliabue (Plunkett) Bruno Carmassi (Lord Tristan), Mario Zorognotti (The Sheriff), Orchestra and Chorus of Radiotelevisione Italiana, Turin, conducted by Francesco Molinari-Pradelli. Cetra set B-1254, 2 discs, \$9.96.

▲THOUGH *Martha* was first produced in German in Vienna, November 25, 1847, and its composer, Friedrich von Flotow, was German-born, the opera has always been considered part of the Italian repertoire in America. The reason for this is the succession of distinguished Italian-sung performances during many seasons at the Metropolitan, enlisting such stars as Caruso, Sembrich, Hempel, Plancon, Alda, Gigli, De Luca and others. With this set, Cetra presents the first complete Italian performance on records.

Martha is a work of much charm, melodious and facile, a product of 19th-century theater; its bucolic story is studded with light and airy tunes. The two arias, for which the opera is famed, were curiously enough, borrowed and adapted from other works—Lionel's *M'appari* from an earlier Flotow opera, and Harriet's *Last Rose of Summer* from an Irish air with words by Thomas Moore. *The Groves of Blarney*.

Martha is an opera that requires style and technical skill. In these matters the earlier and only other set, the German-sung Urania performance with Erna Berger and Peter Anders, is superior. However, the Cetra performance is a likeable one, and conductor Molinari-Pradelli creates a feeling of bubbling, effervescent ensemble throughout.

Elena Rizzieri, a soprano whose Violetta, Mimi and Butterfly are admired in Italy today, is a youthful, fresh-voiced Harriet (*Martha*), but she is no virtuoso, and her sustained climax notes are spread, unsteady and lacking in brilliance. She sings the *Last Rose of Summer* sweetly, however. Opposite her, Ferruccio Tagliavini takes the ardors of Lionel much too seriously, struggling to make his voice sound bigger than it is. His upper notes

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are strained, but he, too, has his moments and his *M'appari* has a nice legato. Most satisfactory singer in the cast is Carlo Tagliabue as Plunkett. This baritone of strong traditions makes an excellent impression, but apparently he had to submit in having his *Drinking Song* cut in half, and no effects or retards allowed, as they were a generation or two ago. Pia Tassinari, now a successful mezzo-soprano, rather overdoes the comic passages allotted to Nancy, but she sounds well in the sustained portions of the role. Bruno Carmassi, a bass who was recording 25 years ago, seems to be in still admirable vocal condition in the role of the old fop, Sir Tristan. While Rizzieri cannot stand comparison with Berger, and Anders sings more in the spirit of Flotow's music than Tagliavini, the present set will please those who enjoy the suave sounds of the Italian text, employed in this recording. —M.deS.

MESSAGER: *Véronique*; Geori Boue (Véronique), Roger Bourdin (Florestan), Genevieve Moizan (Agathe), Max de Rieux (Loustot), Mary Marquet (Ermerance), M. Carpentier (Coquenard), Orchestra and Chorus conducted by Pierre Dervaux. London International TW-91093/94, 2 discs, \$9.96.

▲VERONIQUE was produced at the Theatre des Bouffes-Parisiens on December 10, 1898, some 16 years before World War I. Paris was then in the midst of its brilliant *Belle Epoque* with little thought of war or the rumors of war. In a city which was paying nightly homage to Sarah Bernhardt, Coquelin, Yvette Guilbert and Mayol, *Véronique* was an instant success.

America is acutely conscious of the Gilbert & Sullivan repertoire, and of operetta in the Viennese manner, but of French operetta it knows little, and is thereby the loser. *Véronique*, with its racy songs, smartly paced spoken dialogue, and gay choruses, is a delightful experience—a perfect example of French operetta at its best. It also reflects a period of taste and elegance when pleasures were simple and also sound.

London's performance, headed by Geori Boue and Roger Bourdin of the Opera-Comique, is an unusually fine and communicative experience. The voices are pungent in the French manner, and the style is sophisticated. Particularly good are the many passages of spoken dialogue, which are tossed off with a diction which is the *ne plus ultra* in stylistic polish. Mme. Boue and Bourdin (one of the many current husband-and-wife teams) are among the most popular musical figures in Paris today. Their singing of the *Duetto de L'An* and the *Duo de l'Escarpolette* (Swing Song), recorded many years ago by Emma Eames and de Gogorza, is quite delightful. Genevieve Moizan, who is the Mignon of London's complete version, is a brilliant Agathe, singing her

opening, *Le bel état de celui de floriste*, with infectious verve. Mary Marquet, a famous actress of the Comédie-Française, has the part of the droll Ermerance du Champ d'Azur.

The story of a lady-of-title who disguises herself as a saleswoman in a flower shop, in order to make sure of her fiancé is naïve, if you will, but the music sounds charming. Pierre Dervaux is a talented young conductor, who understands such music. Recording is worthy of London's considerable reputation. —M.deS.

MOZART: *Die Zauberflöte*; Maria Stader (Pamina); Rita Streich (Queen of the Night); Papagena (Lisa Otto); Ernst Haefliger (Tamino); Josef Greindl (Sarastro); Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau (Papageno); Kim Borg (Speaker); Martin Vantin (Monostatos); Marianne Schech; Liselotte Losch; Margarete Kloss (Three Ladies); others; dialogue of Principals spoken by actors; RIAS Chamber Choir and the Berlin Motet Choir, RIAS Symphony Orchestra, Berlin, conducted by Ferenc Fricsay. Decca set DX-134, 3 discs, \$13.98.

▲IN REVIEWING the recent London set, whose merits were considerable, I stated that it was a pity that the dialogue—a vital part of this opera for clear understanding of the story—was not included to make that set a lasting tribute to its composer. Here, we have the dialogue. Thus we have the opera presented as Mozart intended. Instead of the singers speaking the dialogue, as in the opera house, well-versed actors have been engaged with the exception of the one reading Tamino's lines, who is rather self-effacing on occasion. Considered as a group, the singers are excellent. Easily the best of them, however, is Maria Stader, as Pamina, and Fischer-Dieskau, as Papageno. The latter is equally as fine as Gerhard Huesch in the Victor set and, in some ways, more winning. Haefliger, as Tamino, is more stolid than Simoneau in the London set and inclined to vary the quality of his high tones, yet his aria—*Die bildniss*—is better sung than Simoneau's. Josef Greindl makes a dignified Sarastro though his voice lacks the richness and breadth to make him a commanding figure.

Maria Stader's Pamina is lovely in voice and persuasive in its varying emotions. Rita Streich, as the Queen of the Night, lacks weight of voice for this exacting role, though she sings neatly and with assurance. But her "Rage" aria is less exciting than Wilma Lipp's. Lisa Otto is effective in the brief role of Papagena. The three ladies are quite competent, if not as smooth in ensemble as those in the London set. The balance of the cast are well chosen.

Fricsay's orchestral direction may lack the subtleties of Beecham's, but it is well paced, with rhythmic fluency and dra-

matic spaciousness. The recording is excellent if not quite as rich in tonal depths as the London, which may be due to the spacing on three discs of this more lengthy performance with its added dialogue. But Decca has at long last given us a performance with spoken dialogue and a musical awareness from all that merit much praise. —P.H.R.

VERDI: *Rigoletto*; Giuseppe Di Stefano (The Duke); Tito Gobbi (Rigoletto); Maria Meneghini Callas (Gilda); Nicola Zaccaria (Sparafucile); Adriana Lazzarini (Maddalena); Giuse Gerbino (Giovanna); Plinio Clabassi (Monterone); William Dickie (Marullo); others; Orchestra and Chorus of La Scala, Milan, conducted by Tullio Serafin. Angel set 3537, 5 sides, \$13.94 or \$9.94.

▲THERE are a group of critics and music listeners who exclaim at the number of recordings of a great work. Actually, we have to date eight complete LP recordings of Verdi's *Rigoletto* which, in my estimation, only goes to prove the enduring character of this opera. To live with one performance alone is to deprive oneself of the artistry of singers who have been rightfully acclaimed in the three principal roles. Operatic history is full of great Rigolettos, Dukes and Gildas, and with each succeeding decade others establish their rights as interpreters of these roles. It was logical that Maria Callas would add Gilda to her repertoire and if some, like myself, feel that she has not fully achieved what she may well do in times to come her Gilda is none the less an interesting characterization because of her magnetic personality. She misses the virginal sweetness of the character which Berger and Pagliughi convey. Her "Caro nome" is breathtaking in its technical brilliancy but, for all the lightness of her tone, it suggests a maturity not in keeping with Gilda. Her singing throughout the opera is steadier than usual but some of her tones are displeasing to the ear and her final trill in "Caro nome" sags. Callas is always a fine musician and her ability to act with her voice is ever manifest.

Tito Gobbi is a singing actor who lacks the high tones that others have, but his portrayal of Rigoletto is nevertheless absorbing. He does not have the *cantabile* style that the music asks for, which Warren—coached by the famous De Luca—contrives. Nevertheless, he moves us for the nobility of his characterization. Another singing actor, Taddei, succeeds better than he does in tonal graciousness. Di Stefano has the voice for the Duke but his singing lacks the elegance of Tagliavini and the suavity of Peerce. He spreads his high tones too much, yet in his best moments his naturally fine voice is a pleasure to hear. Zaccaria makes a truly malign Sparafucile and Lazzarini is a good Maddalena. The smaller parts are capably handled.

The orchestral playing is neatly if not excitingly handled by Serafin; he has done better in other Verdi operas. Perhaps he thinks that the excitement in this opera belongs to the singers. At that, he is better than most who have conducted it for LP. The recording is on the whole lifelike though there are some ebbing moments, but where dramatic excitement prevails the reproduction is wonderfully realistic. —P.H.R.

BACH ORGAN WORKS

BACH: *Organ Works*; Helmut Walcha (organ). Archive ARC 3013-30, 18 LPs, each available at \$5.98 each.

▲THESE eighteen long-playing records contain almost all of Sebastian Bach's writing for the organ. This body of the master's work, prodigious in technical and expressive range, is—after over 200 years—still one of the greatest manifestations of human powers. It is, moreover, simply the finest music ever conceived for the instrument.

The way this music is played, recorded, and presented makes this edition one of the noblest monuments the phonograph has yet raised. These records are a portion—a tiny one, at that—of Deutsche Grammophon's Archive Series, which will embrace a period from the dawn of music

in western civilization through the 18th century. Distributed through its American affiliate, Decca, these records are the original German pressings. They are quieter surfaced and clearer and cleaner in sound than those recordings of the same performances of some of Bach organ works previously issued under the Decca imprint.

From these earlier releases, we realized that Helmut Walcha is one of the world's foremost organists with the steadiness, sensitivity, and imagination needed to communicate Bach's thought and expression. Now that we have all of Walcha's Bach (and this is the whole Bach for organ, excepting the eight Little Preludes and Fugues, the six Concertos adapted from other composers, some trios and chorale preludes), we can further appreciate this wonderful artist's immaculate rhythm, his taste in selecting appropriate registrations, his dedication to the expression of Bach's vision of life.

Your reviewer finds Walcha's playing at its very best in the chorale preludes and in the early, passionate preludes and fugues. But it must be said that the least of his accomplishments is superior to what we are ordinarily accustomed to hearing.

For the record here are the contents of the eighteen discs: the trio sonatas (on ARC 3013/4); the preludes, toccatas, fantasies with their fugues (on ARC 3015/20); the *Passacaglia and Fugue* and other miscellaneous pieces (ARC 3021); the complete *Clavier-Uebung* part III (ARC 3022/4); the complete *Orgelbuechlein* (ARC 3025/6); eighteen chorales of various kinds and the six Schuebler chorales (ARC 3027/29); and three large miscellaneous works (ARC 3030).

Now I must mention the superb instruments on which Walcha performs. One is the late-17th-century organ built by the great Arp Schnitger for a church in Hamburg and now in the north German village of Cappel. The other is the organ at St. Jakobi in Luebeck. Both instruments seem ideal from every point of view in rendering Bach's music; both seem to me the finest yet heard from a phonograph record. In the thickest web of sound, each voice has distinctness, and the overall texture maintains an appealing transparency.

Though each listener will have his favorites, I should recommend to those unable to purchase more than a few of these records the following: ARC 3015 (for the most part early preludes and fugues), ARC 3017 (this disc contains both the great Prelude and Fugue in A minor and the Fantasia and Fugue in G minor), at least the first record of the *Clavier-Uebung* (ARC 3022) with the great Prelude in E flat; and the first record devoted to the 18 Chorales (ARC 3027). —C.J.L.

• **BACH:** *Orgelbuechlein*; Carl Weinrich (organ); Westminster set WN-2203 (2 discs), \$9.96. **The Same**; E. Power

Biggs (organ); Columbia set KSI-227 (3 discs), \$11.98.

▲BOTH of these issues are part of projects to record the complete organ works of Bach. The Columbia project with Biggs is now at the halfway mark, the Westminster has just begun. The Westminster is the more exciting, at least in so far as the *Little Organ Book* can demonstrate. Weinrich is a fine organist, though he has always seemed to me more masterful in the secular works of Bach. His *Little Organ Book* is carefully presented but without the spiritual glow of Walcha's (in Deutsche Grammophon's Archive Series). One looks forward to his playing of the preludes, toccatas, fantasies and their fugues. The organ Weinrich uses is that of the Varfrukyrka in Skanninge, Sweden. It is a good instrument if not the equal of the warmer-toned Schnitger organ employed by Walcha.

The greater expense of the Columbia set is due to Biggs' giving us the original chorale before each of Bach's 45 elaborations. This makes a most interesting presentation, but the playing of Biggs and his instrument—the Symphony Hall, Boston, organ—are not quite up to the competition. The Columbia set includes the complete score of the music. —C.J.L.

HI-FI PERCUSSION

Spotlight on Percussion. Vox DL-180, \$6.95.

▲THE NEW addition to Vox's fine series on high fidelity compares favorably with its superb predecessor, "This is High Fidelity." It goes far beyond the usual and overdone high fidelity demonstration record with its wealth of musical and historic information pertaining to that fascinating group of instruments known as the percussion. All the major instruments of this diverse family are aurally demonstrated in their various aspects and uses. Starting with the more familiar orchestral instruments such as the timpani and cymbals we are introduced to the lesser known and more exotic instruments, even including an African declaration of love sent via tamtam. The album is augmented by a comprehensive booklet with charts and diagrams further clarifying the relative importance, uses and historic significance of the various instruments. The whole is finally brought into clear focus by R. D. Darrell's fine notes.

To this reviewer at least, the fine potential of the subject is far from fully realized. Some might term this a technically superb hi fi record. Although the admitted close microphone technique used in this recording may enhance the dramatic qualities of the various instruments it results in a hard, sibilant and unnatural

(Continued on page 139)

WHAT THE CRITICS SAY ABOUT

The DISC BOOK

by David Hall and Abner Levin

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Record Guide

Notes and Reviews

THERE IS IN SOULS a sympathy with sounds, and as
the mind is pitched the ear is pleased with melting
airs or martial, brisk or grave; some chord in unison
with what we hear is touched within us, and the heart
replies.

—William Cowper

ORCHESTRA

BACH: *Violin Concerti, No. 1 in A minor* and *No. 2 in E*; **VIVALDI:** *Concerto in A minor* for two violins; respectively Isaac Stern, David Oistrakh, and both artists, with the Philadelphia Orchestra conducted by Eugene Ormandy. Columbia ML-5087, \$3.98.

▲**INGENIOUS** programming. Heifetz's pairing of the two Bachs is in a class by itself but this is rough competition and the budget-minded will not hesitate. Stern's earlier performance of the *A minor*, made in Prades with Casals, has been my favorite for all its incompatible couplings. I still like it best; this sequel sounds almost perfunctory by comparison. Heifetz has owned the *E major* and he continues to as far as I am concerned, although there is no gainsaying the artistry in Oistrakh's poised understatement. The sonorous Vivaldi piece is the feature of this omnibus recording. It is big and it is beautiful, and so is the collective tone of the Philadelphia and its distinguished collaborators. Spacious sound, and none of it is wasted by any obsequiousness on Ormandy's part. —J.L.

BACH: *Fantasia and Fugue in G minor* (arr. William R. Smith); *Air for the G String*; *Prelude and Fugue in C minor* (arr. Ormandy), *Arioso* (arr. Smith), *Ach, Gott von Himmel sieh darein* (arr. Harl MacDonald), *Fugue in G minor* (arr. Smith), *Fantasia and Fugue in C minor* (arr. Elgar), and *Come, Sweet Death* (arr. Ormandy); the Philadelphia Orchestra conducted by Eugene Ormandy. Columbia ML-5065, \$3.98.

▲**THE** glorious sound of the Philadelphia Orchestra is no longer news, although I must say that the phenomenon rarely has been so elegantly manifest. Nor has Columbia ever captured it so completely. These are sumptuous sonics. Having said all the nice things I can think of, I have to add that these clangorous transcriptions are for the most part a disguise or a disfiguration of the essential Bach. Excepting possibly the Elgar, there is nothing on this program that does not attest to the genius of Ormandy's illustrious predecessor. Stokowski may have perpetrated many a perfidy in those once

infamous arrangements of his, but no one since has been able to mix oil and water quite so well. —J.L.

BACH: *Brandenburg Concertos No. 2 in F* (BWV 1047) and *No. 5 in D* (BWV 1050); Berlin Chamber Orchestra conducted by Hans von Benda. Telefunken LGX-66012, \$4.98.

BACH: *Suite No. 1 in C* (BWV1066) and *No. 3 in D* (BWV 1068); Berlin Chamber Orchestra conducted by Hans von Benda. Telefunken LGX-66040, \$4.98.

▲**MANY** years ago the Amsterdam Concertgebouw Orchestra recorded the Suite No. 2 under the direction of Willem Mengelberg. To many collectors, that set was one of the finest performances of a Bach Suite available. Now that orchestra has re-recorded it with a distinguished flute soloist under the direction of its regular conductor, Eduard von Beinum. A harpsichord continuo is used in both Suites. The performances are crisp and lively, with spacious, well-balanced sound.

The von Benda performances are beautifully recorded, but they are somewhat heavy-handed compared with von Beinum's versions. Benda apparently does not use a harpsichord for the continuo, although he does so in his recording of the *Brandenburg Concertos Nos. 2 and 5*. —R.R.

BALAKIREV: *Russia; Islamey; Thamar*; the Philharmonia Orchestra conducted by Lovro Von Maticic. Angel 35291, \$4.98 or \$3.48.

▲**THIS** is the fifth *Tamar* on LP, and I am bound to say that it is every bit as effective as either Ansermet's or Beecham's despite the lesser fame of Von Maticic (who has been remembered, however, for his exemplary conducting of the abridged *Arabella*). The other tone poems, *Russia* and *Islamey*, are belated first microgroove performances, and more than welcome. Gerald Abraham has it that the former is "undoubtedly the finest" of all the myriad fantasies on Slavic folk material. This hyperbole is almost defensible on the present evidence; certainly the Philharmonia puts on a riotous display of orchestral color. Those of us who cannot forget the late Simon Barere's incredible

way with *Islamey* will be perforce uneasy about this Casella arrangement. But in all fairness let us admit that no piano piece ever cried out so desperately for the resources of a full orchestra, and if any ensemble can cope with its immense difficulties the virtuosic Philharmonia can. Maticic extracts every last hue in its unmatched spectrum, with sonic consequences that are without parallel in the Angel catalogue. —J.L.

BEETHOVEN: *Coriolan Overture, Op. 62; Symphony No. 2 in D, Op. 36*; Philharmonia Orchestra conducted by Herbert von Karajan. Angel 35196, \$4.98 or \$3.48.

▲**THE** overture precedes the symphony which is as it should be. While these performances are authoritative in their way, neither quites succeeds in equaling the musical magic that Toscanini and Scherchen achieve in the symphony and, in my estimation, only Toscanini realizes in the overture. The overture is rather stolid, owing to the fact that Karajan does not emphasize the vivacity indicated in the marking as Toscanini does. One hopes that the Maestro's performance of the *Coriolan* will materialize someday on LP. The best part of the symphony is the slow movement, which is beautifully played. One feels that Karajan feels the opening and closing movements should have dramatic stress. In both, he seems over-conscious of the architecture which leads him to over-emphasis on the strings, especially the first violins, which lends a weightiness to the music. Toscanini's and Scherchen's strings are more buoyant. The sound here is excellent in most respects, though a bit heavy in reberation. One cannot be sure how much sound does for or against a conductor. Scherchen gets the best sound, but soundwise the Toscanini performance is well served. —P.H.R.

BEETHOVEN: *Symphony No. 3 in E Flat, Op. 55 ("Eroica")*; the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra conducted by William Steinberg. Capitol P-8334, \$3.98.

▲**MUST** the *Eroica* be heroic from start to finish? Steinberg eschews histrionics, lets the music unwind in its own good time, so that the first movement holds no hint of the drama to come and even the second keeps its implicit tensions well under control. Only then does the accumulative impact of the finale begin to take shape, and with all the more effect when the thunderbolts eventually are unloosed. A restrained *Eroica*, one thinks upon first hearing. But no, it is rather a carefully molded one, the subtleties of which bespeak a total awareness of the expressive power that is contained in the score. Steinberg does not reveal it all at once, that's all. As always, his orchestra plays

divinely, and the sound is Capitol's "full-dimensional" best. —J.L.

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BEETHOVEN: *Symphony No. 6 in F, Op. 68 ("Pastorale")*; Philharmonic-Symphony Orchestra of New York conducted by George Szell. Columbia ML-5057, \$3.98.

▲THE LATEST version of the Beethoven *Pastorale Symphony* is one of the best yet. The orchestral sound is ravishingly beautiful, and the performance combines many of the finest attributes of earlier versions. The lyrical quality of the second movement has rarely been matched, and the sweep of the finale is completely thrilling. Highly recommended. —R.R.

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BRAHMS: *Double Concerto in A minor, Op. 102; Haydn Variations, Op. 56-a; Tragic Overture, Op. 81*; Isaac Stern (violin), Leonard Rose (cello), and the Philharmonic-Symphony Orchestra of New York conducted by Bruno Walter. Columbia ML-5076, \$3.98.

▲HAVING accomplished a superb recording of this incandescent *Op. 102* performance, Columbia chose to couple it with a pair of re-issues—and at that, with works virtually every prospective buyer must have in his collection already, perhaps even in the same versions. Forgive me if this seems patronizing, but it is my inference that no one who has reached the point of receptivity to the last and expressively the most diffuse of Brahms' orchestral pieces could possibly be without favorite performances of the more accessible *Haydn Variations*, not to mention the *Tragic Overture*. Indeed, as intimated, possibly those of Walter himself, the present ones being identical with those in his de luxe edition of the Brahms symphonies and selected other works (DSL-200). The thousands who bought that set have every right to be indignant at such duplication. Without further belaboring this unfortunate aspect of an otherwise happy situation, it must be conceded that we have at hand, finally, a worthy successor to the ancient Heifetz-Fuermann collaboration so long unchallenged. Stern and Rose own a surfeit of tone and technique, and they both outdo themselves in matching their essentially Romantic temperament with Walter's. The result is music-making of a high order, for no other kind could make a thing of loveliness out of this awkward hulk of a masterwork. —J.L.

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DVORAK: *Slavonic Dances, Op. 46 and Op. 72* (complete); **TCHAIKOVSKY:** *Romeo and Juliet—Fantasy Overture*; Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Rafael Kubelik. London set LL-1283/84, 2 discs, \$7.96.

▲THERE is no question that Kubelik's heart is in his performances of the *Slavonic Dances*; he performs them with care and

affection and substantiates their charm and stimulation without overstressing of their sometime noisiness. He is more meticulous than Talich and he has at his command a finer orchestra, but there is about the Talich performances a certain spontaneity that relates the dances to the open air rather than the concert hall. Someone once said that these dances belonged to out-of-door concerts rather than to the concert hall which is, in part, hardly a fallacy for, despite the fact that Dvorak utilized only the forms of the dances to which he applied his melodic and harmonic imagination, the characteristic spirit of the Czech and other dances was originally related to out-of-door entertainment. As home entertainment, these dances are hardly recommendable in their entirety for they are not deserving of being relegated to background music. What an assignment for the famous Vienna Philharmonic but what wondrously rich sound is contributed to this music. There has been nothing quite like the quality of orchestral sound in any previous releases I can recall, which is as much due to the superb London engineering as to the playing of the orchestra.

It seems to me that Kubelik could have chosen some other Dvorak works for the fourth side of this set—two of the neglected *Slavonic Rhapsodies*, for example. His performance of the Tchaikovsky *Romeo and Juliet* is beautifully played but it is almost over-meticulous; even the feuding sections seem too controlled despite their forcefulness which may be a subjective reaction after hearing the Dvorak dances that belong so definitely to a far different world. Anyway, this *Romeo and Juliet* is as wonderfully realistic in sound as any one extant. —P.H.R.

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HINDEMITH: *Mathis der Maler—Symphony; Symphonic Dances*; Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Paul Hindemith. Decca DL-9818, \$3.98.

▲HINDEMITH is back after nearly two decades at the old stand—the podium of the Berlin Philharmonic—giving his own sensitive and purposeful performance of his *Mathis der Maler*. I have always clung to his first recording, despite its inadequate sound for these times, for no one else has quite succeeded in similarly sustaining my interest. Hindemith has been called one of the solidest and conservative workmen of our times, but conducting his own works he gives credence to the permanence of his conservatism with its poetic essence as well as dramatic puissance not always fully confirmed by others.

His *Symphonic Dances* written in 1937, three years after his opera *Mathis der Maler* from which his symphony was drawn, is in the nature of another symphony in four movements—marked in turn slowly, lively, very slowly and "moderately moving." Here, this modern

countarpuntal wizard neither affirms nor refutes the title of the work. If dancing was the motivating principle of this music then dancing, as we think of it, has undergone a metamorphosis and found a new enrichment in symphonic texture. The work is rich in its variety of melodic and textual contrivances, the product of a musical intellect who does not refute emotionalism but rather invites us to think upon its derivation. Unlike *Mathis der Maler*, this is absolute music that yields only as much to its listener as his concentration elicits. It is a work well worth knowing and living with. The recording of both compositions is excellent. —P.H.R.

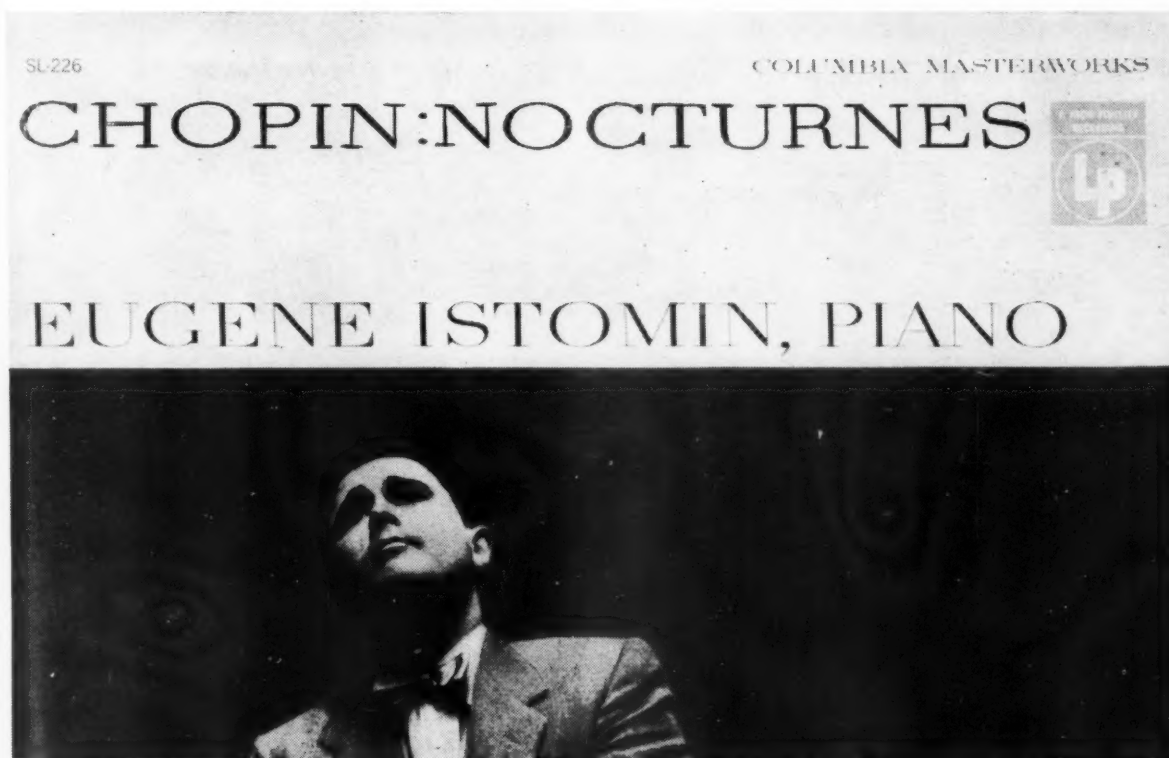
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MARTIN: *Concerto for Violin and Orchestra*; Wolfgang Schneiderhan and the Swiss Romande Orchestra conducted by Ernest Ansermet. London 10" LD-9213, \$2.98.

▲THE Swiss composer, Frank Martin, has contrived a rather unusual musical treatise in his violin concerto. It is a work that might not appeal to those virtuosos who shun intellect's dominating emotions or the orchestra's sometimes being in antithesis to the solo instrument. The violin has plenty to do, but the concerto is more symphonic in texture than most and the orchestra almost steals the show in the questing second movement. This is music of our time, thoughtful and even provocative. It is music with which to live intimately, not casually as one is apt to do with the melodically easier assimilated 19th-century concertos. The annotator speaks of the opening movement's suggesting a rising tide. Its drama develops in much the same manner, yet there is nothing of the sea in this music. Martin builds in dramatic intensity in both his first and second movements. How exquisitely fashioned are the sustained lyrical flights for the violin! The finale, with its somewhat dancelike rhythms, seems more commonplace after the accumulative drama of the previous movements, but it has its technical interest. Schneiderhan plays this music with fervor and assured control, and Ansermet handles the rich orchestral part with equal effectiveness both in detailed refinement and dramatic impulse. The recording is excellently balanced and realistic in sound. —P.H.R.

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MENDELSSOHN: *Andante, Scherzo, Capriccio and Fugue, Op. 81*; **DVORAK:** *Notturmo, Op. 40*; **WOLF:** *Italian Serenade*; the Arthur Winograd String Ensemble. M-G-M E-3295, \$3.98.

▲FIRST microgroove recordings of the Mendelssohn and Dvorak (no others are extant in any case) but it is a nuisance to have yet another version of the Wolf, which I for one have two other performances of already. It is a short enough work, to be sure, so that attention properly

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focuses on the pair of premières. The omnibus Mendelssohn piece actually comprises four separate items dating respectively from 1847, ditto, 1843, and 1827. A publisher put them together after the composer's death and no one ever has undone this temerity, so that it is long since customary to play the lot as if they were in fact successive movements. Purists will not be pleased, but I cannot bring myself to protest in the face of this delicious playing. Winograd's virtuosi do nobly, too, by the pristine lyricism of the young, not yet Brahmsian Dvorak. Clear, clean sonics. —J.L.

MOZART: *Piano Concerto No. 27 in B flat, K. 595; Piano Sonata No. 11 in A, K. 331; Wilhelm Backhaus (piano) with Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Karl Boehm. London LL-1282, \$3.98.*

▲THOSE who have used Schnabel for a yardstick in measuring performances of Mozart's last piano concerto will not be satisfied with this new version. They will not like the slackness and heaviness that permeates the corner movements, and they will object to the way Backhaus throws away the great theme that opens the divine slow movement. The remainder of the slow movement is, however, worth hearing no matter what your standards. And the sound is wonderfully London. The lovely K.331 is given an autumnal performance by Backhaus. This has its advantages from time to time; but I think Mozart had spring in mind, and I believe Solomon in his recording on HMV shares this point of view. —C.J.L.

MOZART: *Serenade No. 12 in C minor, K. 388; Divertimento No. 15 in B flat, K. 287; Arthur Fiedler and his Sinfonietta. RCA Victor LM-1936, \$3.98.*

MOZART: *Divertimento No. 17 in D, K. 334; Eine kleine Nachtmusik, K. 525; the Chicago Symphony Orchestra conducted by Fritz Reiner. RCA Victor LM-1966, \$3.98.*

▲ADMIRABLE issues, both. Every other K. 388 is coupled with the K. 375, the Westminster version being the best bet among them. Fiedler's is as formal as any, but there is an ever so subtle air of levity about his performance that makes it the most deliciously listenable of the lot. His K. 287 is more unbuttoned than that on London, better played than that on Vanguard, better recorded than either. Reiner's Mozart is a special case. I happen to think that his K. 334 is wonderful, but admittedly it is less warm than its Vanguard competition, less proprietous than either of the chamber-scaled versions on London and Westminster. This is the most free-wheeling interpretation of all, full steam ahead and caution be damned. Artfully shaped, of course, but without the slightest kow-towing to Viennese

traditions. And the Chicagoans play like so many angels. Likewise with the K. 525, which I hereby nominate as the most nearly ideal of the many currently available. Others may play it with more lilt, but Reiner plays it with the perfection that is its rarely tendered due. Luscious sound, free of the excess reverberation that afflicts so much recorded Mozart. —J.L.

MOZART: *Sinfonia Concertante in E flat, K. 364; Adagio in E, K. 261; Rondo Concertante in B flat, K. 269; Rondo in C, K. 373; Nap de Klijn (violin, in all), Paul Godwin (viola, in the K. 364), and the Vienna Symphony Orchestra conducted by Bernhard Paumgartner. Epic LC-3197, \$3.98.*

▲THUS far the Epic survey of Mozart has brought us several outstanding performances, but even so this one of the K. 364 is almost too good to believe. I have never heard this music played so beautifully, indeed so perfectly, and yet with such spontaneity that the very freshness almost belies any more serious expressive purpose. This is the quintessence of Mozart, and few performers ever approach it. De Klijn and Godwin actually achieve it, and Paumgartner for once lets himself go to join in the consummation. Such headlong tempi as these will not please partisans of the Viennese persuasion; for them the Westminster version will remain the best. All others should investigate this disc. The shorter pieces are elegantly turned out. Resonant sound. —J.L.

SIBELIUS: *Violin Concerto in D minor, Op. 47; PAGANINI: Violin Concerto No. 1 in D, Op. 6; Yehudi Menuhin, respectively with the London Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Sir Adrian Boult and the London Symphony Orchestra conducted by Anatole Fistoulari. RCA Victor LM-1946, \$3.98.*

SIBELIUS: *Violin Concerto in D minor, Op. 47; GLAZUNOV: Violin Concerto in A minor, Op. 82; Thomas Magyar with The Hague Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Willem Van Otterloo. Epic LC-3184, \$3.98.*

▲IT is a pleasure to report that Yehudi Menuhin is once again playing approximately as he did in the old days. His last several recordings have been disappointing. Even this latest evidences too much effort, as if the artist were determined to show that he still owns all of his youthful technique, which he decidedly does not. But he remains an interpreter of unequalled musicality and these performances are immensely rewarding despite a surfeit of violinistic force that somewhat exhausts the listener as it must have exhausted the soloist. Remember the Paganini that Menuhin made at age 12?

This recording recaptures some of that magic. And the Sibelius is wondrously introspective notwithstanding some lapses of intonation that might have been avoided under slightly less bow pressure. The accompaniments are sympathetic in the extreme, and RCA has never given us a better sounding import. By comparison, the Epic disc necessarily comes off second best. Magyar is a virtuoso of the non-intellectual school and he goes to town with the Glazunov, albeit with slower tempi than we have become accustomed to. His Sibelius, however, is too glibly superficial to be taken seriously. Nor is the sound on either side up to the highest current standards. —J.L.

STRAVINSKY: *The Fire Bird; L'Orchestre de la Suisse Romande conducted by Ernest Ansermet. London LL-1272, \$3.98.*

▲AT LAST many will have the opportunity to familiarize themselves with the complete score Stravinsky created for the ballet theater. For those who have not seen a complete *Fire Bird*, this superbly recorded disc will provide new fascinations capable of stimulating the most laggard imagination. It is a rich score, this *Fire Bird*, and if the very best of it is already known, even the second-quality portions are arresting, too. Moreover, it is a delight to discover the large and small bits of the suite in proper context. Ansermet gives a luminous, detailed performance, stylistically beyond reproach, that is full of appropriate, exotic atmosphere. But it is frustrating to the listener in that it never gives sufficient release in the form of a climax of adequate power. Neither in the Katschei episode nor in the finale is there that fullness of sound and expression that would properly cap Ansermet's painstaking build-up. This disc should not be missed on any account, but it cannot be expected to give a final measure of fulfillment. —C.J.L.

WAGNER: *Prelude, Transformation Scene, Act I Closing Scene, Klingsor's Magic Garden, Good Friday Spell, and Act III Closing Scene from Parsifal; the Philadelphia Orchestra conducted by Eugene Ormandy. Columbia ML-5080, \$3.98.*

▲THOSE who cannot yet embrace the complete *Parsifal*—and for their future reference the London album is one of the most nearly perfect performances in the whole recorded repertoire—will be well advised to acquire this ingenious orchestral précis of Wagner's autumnal masterpiece. This is not a Stokowskian "symphonic synthesis", mind you. There seems to have been no tampering with the orchestration except insofar as necessary to effect an uninterrupted flow of music in the sequence of the context. Ormandy's magnificent orchestra gives its all, and

even if he has elected faster tempi than he should have there can be no question of their effectiveness in this unfoldment. Columbia has been offering us quite a bit of Kostelanetz "opera without voice" lately; success having greeted this unorthodoxy we must be thankful that a conductor of Ormandy's stature drew *Parsifal*. Resplendent sound. —J.L.

CHAMBER MUSIC

FAURE: *Sonatas for Violin and Piano—No. 1 in A, Op. 13, and No. 2 in E minor, Op. 108*; Zino Francescatti and Robert Casadesus. Columbia ML-5049, \$3.98.

FAURE: *Sonatas for Cello and Piano—No. 1 in D minor, Op. 109; No. 2 in G minor, Op. 117*; Monique and Guy Fallot. London/Ducetret-Thomson DTL-93050, \$4.98.

▲ARTISTS have to have devotion for lyric melodies and imagination for poetic beauty to perform Fauré's chamber music. That imagination can include passion and that devotion strength of purpose such as Francescatti and Casadesus bring to these violin sonatas. The sparkling gaiety of the first sonata, a product of the composer's 31st year, is very much alive in this performance, and its poetic qualities have a welcome masculine intensity. Those who have shunned this work previously are urged to hear this performance. The second sonata, with its especially lovely slow movement, a product of Fauré's 72nd year, belies his age with its ardor. The musical style has broadened and the harmonic structure progressed. The late chamber music of Fauré is rich in its inspirational force, as anyone who has lived intimately with his *Quartet, Op. 108* can attest, where inwardness prevails as in Beethoven's later quartets. The recording here is richly realistic with plenty of piano—the latter a bit too strong in some climaxes.

The two *Cello Sonatas* were written in Fauré's 71st and 78th years. In these works, the inwardness prevails but the inspiration has a youthful freshness combined—as one writer has said—"with the masterly treatment of experience." The opening movements of both works reveal the hand of experience, the slow movements the heart of the poet, and the finales—notably that of the *G minor Quartet*—the vigor of youth. Monique and Guy Fallot are sensitive and skilled performers. One feels that they must have lived with these works a long time. The recording is excellent. —P.H.R.

MOZART: *Quartets in C, K. 170; in E flat, K. 171; in B flat, K. 172*; Barylli Quartet. Westminster WN- or SWN-18103, \$4.98 or \$3.98.

▲THE LATEST in the Barylli Quartet's series of recordings of early Mozart

Quartets contains three composed in Vienna during the late summer and early fall of 1773. We begin to see more clearly than in the works composed immediately before these the formation of Mozart's style. There is maturity and passion as well as elegance and poise in these scores. They appear infrequently in recital, so these recorded versions are most welcome. This seems to be the first recorded performance of the *Quartets in C, K. 170* and *in B flat, K. 172*. An earlier LP version of the *E flat Quartet* by the Loewenguth Quartet has been discontinued and is no longer available. Its loss is not really lamentable now that we have this faithfully recorded version. The sound is lifelike in its realism. —R.R.

MOZART: *Quintet in E flat, K. 542*; **BEETHOVEN:** *Quintet in E flat, Op. 16*; Philharmonia Wind Quintet (Walter Gieseking, piano; Cecil James, bassoon; Bernard Walton, clarinet; Dennis Brain, horn; Sidney Sutcliffe, oboe). Angel 35303, \$4.98 or \$3.48.

▲RECENTLY, we had these works coupled in performances by Rudolf Serkin and the Philadelphia Players that elicited high praise (Columbia 4834). Their approach to these scores was more intense than the present ensemble, who favor more classically refined interpretations. Both evaluations of the works are equally cogent. Yet, in the Mozart the romantic glow which Serkin and company often bring to the music heightens dramatic intensity. Choice between the two performances may be governed by the reproduction which, in this case, is more transparent with less reverberation. I particularly like the lucidity derived from less reverberation in Mozart's music, and assuredly the early Beethoven profits from the same treatment. However, the balance in the former disc is certainly something exceptional of its kind, and there is an overall richness of sound that has ear appeal. Gieseking does not quite equal Serkin in power in climactic moments and, I would say, he is more sparing of the pedals. Some chamber music enthusiasts may well acquire both recordings, for the excellence of performances in both cases is such that one's immediate enjoyment in either versions could preclude immediate evaluation of overall merits. These performances and the ones issued by Columbia outclass all others on LP. —P.H.R.

KEYBOARD

CHOPIN: *Scherzo in B flat minor, Op. 31; Preludes in D flat and D minor, Op. 28, Nos. 15 and 4; Polonaises in A and A flat, Op. 40, No. 1 and Op. 53; Berceuse in D flat, Op. 57; Nocturne in F sharp, Op. 15, No. 2; Etudes, Op. 10, Nos. 3, 5, 12 and Op. 25, No. 9; Fan-*

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taisie-Improvisu, Op. 66; Mazurkas in A minor and G minor, Op. 17, No. 4 and Op. 24, No. 1; Waltz in D flat, Op. 64, No. 1; Istvan Nadas (piano). Period SPL-722, \$4.98.

▲NADAS is a musical spirit. There is nobility and sensitivity in his work which is also clean and shows an uncommon feeling for harmonic texture. Indeed Nadas has so much to give that it is a pity it is not enough for Chopin. What he lacks is temperament—the one indispensable element for performing the works of the beloved Polish master. One must be tender, but one must not seem too careful. Spontaneity is the soul of romantic art and of Chopin in particular. Nadas must give this impetuous music its head sometime if he is to win more than our respect. —C.J.L.

COUPERIN: 10 Pieces; **RAVEL:** *Le Tombeau de Couperin*; Robert Wallenborn (piano). Telefunken LGX-66041, \$4.98.

▲HERE is a sleeper. Wallenborn is not a pianist known to me previously, but he is obviously an artist on the basis on this recording. The Couperin numbers are well chosen and played in an appropriately crisp and light-footed manner. The delightful *Tombeau de Couperin* is similarly played and similarly enjoyable. Wallenborn does not possess the big tone and

his way is far from the grand manner. But he has taste and a good mind and here he gives much satisfaction. —C.J.L.

SCHUBERT: *Fantasy in F minor, Op. 103*; **BRAHMS:** *Hungarian Dances*; Helen and Karl Ulrich Schnabel (duopianists); Epic LC-3183, \$3.98.

▲AN extraordinary performance of the great *F minor fantasy* is the feature of this recommendable disc. One feels the presence of Artur Schnabel himself in the lean sound, the wide span of dynamics, the sharply contoured phrases, and the cogent expressivity of Schubert's most remarkable four-hand composition. Helen and Karl Ulrich have learned their lessons well; it will be a pleasure to hear them often. They are also effective in eight of Brahms' *Hungarian Dances*. These familiar compositions can be heard here in their original four-hand form, and delightful they are, too. The Schnabels' playing is satisfying and as modest as Brahms was when he asked for credit only as an arranger of the first dozen dances when they were published in 1869. —C.J.L.

VOICE

DUET ALBUM: *Io son pur vezzetta pastorella*; *Tornate, O cari baci*; *Ardo, e scoprir*; *Bel pastor* (Monteverdi); *Detesta la cattiva sorte in amore*; *Lungi omai*; *Il mio core*; *A pie d'un verde* (Carissimi); *Moravian Duets, Op. 32* (Dvorak); Elisabeth Schwarzkopf & Irmgard Seefried (sopranos in Italian & German) with Gerald Moore (piano). Angel 35290, \$4.98 or \$3.48.

▲MMES. Schwarzkopf and Seefried blend their lovely voices in a completely captivating collection of duets. The Monteverdi pieces are from two collections of madrigals dating from 1641 and 1651. One, *Ardo, e scoprir*, was in the fabulous Boulanger collection that certainly should appear on LP. This version with two sopranos is almost as fine as the older version with two tenors, which is indeed high praise. The other pieces are equally attractive. There is all too little Carissimi on records, so these beautiful miniatures are most welcome.

On the reverse side we have a complete recording of the *Moravian Duets* by Antonin Dvorak. A earlier recording by Marta Fuchs and Margarete Klose had twelve of the thirteen duets. The recorded sound was satisfactory, but hardly in the same class as the present version. The music is rather lightweight after the 17th-Century duets, but there is a charm that cannot be denied. They are sung in German, as was the earlier performance. The overall effect is most pleasant, so the record may be recommended without qualification.

The sound is perfectly balanced with just the right contrast between the voices

and the accompanying piano. The complete texts and translations are given in the booklet that accompanies the deluxe edition. —R.R.

■ **MOZART:** *Mass in C, K.317* ("Coronation"); Maria Stader (soprano), Sieglinde Wagner (contralto), Helmut Krebs (tenor), Josef Greindl (basso) and St. Hedwig's Cathedral Choir, conducted by Igor Markevitch. *Symphony No. 38, in D, K.504* ("Prague"); Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Igor Markevitch. Decca DL-9805, \$4.98.

▲LIKE SO MUCH of the church music of Mozart, Haydn and their contemporaries, the *Coronation Mass* has come in for its share of criticism on the grounds of its worldly graces. Unfortunately the two previously available recordings were not of a quality to disprove these allegations or to convince the first-time hearer that the score is an extraordinary one. At last we have a performance worthy of the work; it will take determined resistance now for anyone to deny the beauties of Mozart's score or its worthiness as an expression of religion as he saw it. The solo quartet, which carries so much of the burden, is an expert group, with particularly lovely singing by Maria Stader, whose voice is as clear and liquid as the freshest mountain brook. Her performance of the solo part in the *Agnus Dei* (so strongly reminiscent of *Dove sono*) will linger long in the memory. Krebs is hardly less distinguished, though his part is not so prominent; Wagner and Greindl complete a well blended and balanced quartet. The tricky interplay of the voices, especially in the *Kyrie*, is managed with ease and grace by all concerned. Chorus and orchestra are admirable.

The symphony on the reverse bears the special stamp of this conductor's hand. Though his rhythmic pulse is not so strong and positive as that of some Mozart conductors, he molds his phrases with loving care, especially in the slow movement. The finale is altogether delightful. The recording is full and lifelike, with a reverberation that is not excessive. —P.L.M.

■ **RUSSIAN SONGS:** *Shrove Tuesday* (*Merry Butterweek*) (Serov); *Prayer to St. Simeon* (Strokin); *Lord Have Mercy on Our People* (Tchesnokov); *Litany* (Gretchaninov); *Song of the Lumberjacks*; *The Bandore*; *Down Peterskaya Street*; *Going Down the Volga*; *The Lonely Autumn Night*; *Song of the Twelve Brigands*; *Psalm 137—By the Waters of Babylon* (Traditional); Boris Christoff (bass) with the Feodor Potorjinski Russian Choir. RCA Victor LM-1945, \$3.98.

▲THE MANTLE of Chaliapin seems to have fallen on the shoulders of the Bul-

garian bass, Boris Christoff. In this recital he sings several of the traditional songs made familiar to concert audiences and record collectors by the former great Russian artist. We have the rousing *Shrove Tuesday* from Alexander Serov's opera *Hostile Power* and the traditional a cappella *Down the Petersky* accompanied by a balalaika orchestra, while the rest are sung with chorus. The choral background is really sufficient in the other selections. Those who remember Chaliapin's wonderful versions of *The Legend of the 12 Brigands* and the Gretchaninov *Litany* will get great pleasure out of this release. There is great variety in Russian choral music, especially when performed as vividly as here. The deep, booming basses of the chorus are reproduced with exciting realism and the balance is most satisfactory. —R.R.

■ **STARRING RICHARD TUCKER:** *Un Ballo in Maschera—Di tu se fedele* (Barcarolle); **Luisa Miller—Quando le sere al placido; *Il Trovatore—Ah! su ben mio & Di quella pira*; *Requiem—Ingemisco tamquam reus* (Verdi); *Manon Lescaut—Donna non vidi mai* (Puccini); *Andrea Chenier—Un di all'azzurro spazio* (*Improviso*) (Giordano); *Iris—Apri la tua finestra* (Mascagni); *Manon—Ah! fuyez, douce image* (Massenet); Richard Tucker (tenor) with the Columbia Symphony Orchestra conducted by Fausto Cleva. Columbia ML-5062, \$3.98.**

▲RICHARD TUCKER gives us some examples of his art on this mixed recital. We have familiar operatic selections as well as the *Ingemisco* from Verdi's *Requiem*. In none does Mr. Tucker fall below his usual efficient, if not very exciting level of singing. It is perhaps asking too much to have a chorus in the selections that demand one, such as the *Barcarolle* from *Un Ballo in Maschera* or the *Di quella pira* from *Il Trovatore*, but in this day and age a singer has too many arias at his disposal that do not require this additional support. The recorded sound is completely satisfactory. —R.R.

■ **SCHUBERT:** *Die Winterreise, Op. 89*; **SCHUMANN:** *Liederkreis, Op. 39*; Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau (baritone) and Gerald Moore (piano). RCA Victor set LM-6036, \$7.96.

▲AS ADMIRABLY as Hans Hotter sang in the recent issue of Schubert's *Die Winterreise*, the dark quality of his voice made for an unrelieved gloom. These songs were composed for high voice and most of them benefit from a tenor though a lyric baritone can do justice to them. This Fischer-Dieskau proves in this recording. He articulates the words and colors his voice better than Hotter, and his is the more flexible instrument. Vocally, this is the most appealing version of *Die Winterreise* on LP. Yet, with a

In this additional audiences her great rousing Serov's additional mpanied while the e choral he other per Cha- Legend chaninov t of this Russian performed booming ced with is most —R.R.

ER: *Un se fedele* —Quando —Ah! su equiem— : *Manon* (Puccini); *ro spazio* —*Aprì la non*—Ah! Richard Columbia cted by MIL-5062,

us some d recital. ctions as *Requiem*, below his ing level too much ions that olle from uella pira y and age s disposal onal sup- completely —R.R.

Op. 89; Op. 39; (tone) and Victor set

s Hotter Schubert's ity of his d gloom. high voice a tenor justice to proves in the words n Hotter, instrument. ng version et, with a

cord Guide

less sensuous voice a pupil of Elena Gerhardt, Victor Carne, carries on a well remembered tradition in a simpler and expressive manner. Fischer-Dieskau, however, is unquestionably the more experienced artist. Though he tends to overdramatize some phrases in songs like *Der Lindenbaum* and *Letzte Hoffnung*, the beauty of his voice and the grace of his lyrical artistry sustain the listener's interest. He makes a memorable experience of his *Die Krache*.

Again, in Schumann's *Liederkreis*, we miss the floating limpidity of the higher voice, particularly the soprano, in some of the songs—notably *Mondnacht*—where a soprano can reach out, so to speak, to the silver loveliness of the moon. Suzanne Danco, floating her silvery voice admirably, creates the right effect. But Fischer-Dieskau sings this song with ingratiating legato none the less. In many ways, he is more successful in *Waldegessprach*, and notably so in *Auf einer Burg*. With the aid of Gerald Moore's magical fingers at the piano, no other version of *Frühlingsnacht* quite matches this one.

Gerald Moore's accompaniments in both recitals are the work of a true partner, an artist of equal distinction. Thus, we have the effect of a true chamber music ensemble which all lieder recitals were intended to be. Moore's piano is best served in the Schubert cycle. The reproduction in all, however, is generally excellent, although spacing the Schubert recital on three instead of four sides, as HMV originally did, leaves one with the suspicion that the HMV records may be slightly better in overall reproduction. Economy in business is one thing; economy in artistic values is another.—P.H.R.

REVIEWS IN BRIEF

DITTERSDORF: *Symphony in C*; **MOZART:** *Symphony No. 14 in A, K. 114*; **J. C. BACH:** *Sinfonia in B flat, Op. 18, No. 2*; **HAYDN:** *Divertimento in G*; the Danish State Radio Chamber Orchestra conducted by Mogens Woeldike. London LL-1308, \$3.98.

▲AN unashamed hodge-podge, and for all of that a delight from end to end. True, the Mozart might have been handled with more deftness, befitting its youthful spirits, but there is no lack of elegance in Woeldike's conducting and he is careful to keep the dynamic scale down where it belongs. The other performances invite no disapproval on any grounds. The recorded sound is creamy smooth. —J.L.

GRIEG: *Lyric Pieces, Books 3 & 4, Opp. 43 & 47*; Menahem Pressler (piano). MGM LP E-3197, \$3.98.

▲BOOK THREE of the *Lyric Pieces* contains the following: *Butterfly*; *Solitary Wanderer*; *In My Homeland*; *Little Bird*; *Erotic*; and *To the Spring*. Book Four consists of: *Valse-Improvisé*; *Album Leaf*; *Melody*; *Halling*; *Melancholy*; *Hop Dance*; and *Elegy*.

Some of these pieces have been recorded before, but this seems to be the first time that they have been presented as a series. An earlier record (MGM E-3196) contains the first two books of the *Lyric Pieces*, so perhaps the entire series is forthcoming. In any event, the present release is played with

feeling and tonal variety by Menahem Pressler. None of these pieces is too profound, but they make decidedly pleasant listening, especially when presented as they are here. Perhaps Rubinstein is closer to the heart of Grieg and for those who want a mixed program of Grieg's piano music, his recent record is recommended. —R.R.

GRIEG: *Peer Gynt Suites*; **IPPOLITOV-IVANOV:** *Caucasian Sketches*; the Hollywood Bowl Symphony Orchestra conducted by Felix Slatkin. Capitol P-8329, \$3.98.

▲THERE is a glister on this filmdom orchestra that the finest eastern ensembles hardly could imitate. And why not, since its members are (by day) the highest paid instrumentalists in the land? After studio hours they like to get together for "kicks", a Bowl job being one answer. So that there is no gainsaying the quality of these performances, although Slatkin does not impress as a conductor of any special insights. As it happens, this is the only pairing of the two scores. I prefer Ormandy for the Grieg and Mitropoulos for the I-I, but if you happen to want them together you will not go wrong with this disc. Luxurious sound, as usual with Capitol's domestic recordings. —J.L.

HAYDN: *Symphony No. 88 in G*; *Symphony No. 104 in D* ("London"); the Cleveland Orchestra conducted by George Szell. Epic LC-3196, \$3.98.

▲REALLY impressive sound—the most realistic I have heard out of Cleveland. The performances, too, are impressive, although Szell's predisposition to heavyweight tactics is far more appropriate to the later work than to the relative *jeunesse* of the earlier one, which wears a rather too grim mien in this disclosure. Both are superbly articulated, all the same. —J.L.

HINDEMITH: *Kleine Kammermusik, Op. 24, No. 2*; *Sonata for Oboe and Piano*; respectively the French Wind Quintet and Pierre Pierlot (oboe) with Annie D'Arco (piano). London/L'Oiseau-Lyre DL-53007, \$2.98.

▲FIRST recording of the sonata, which is doubtless the only work in an all too limited repertory that eschews the dulcet loveliness of the oboe in its preoccupation with nominally musical values. A must for oboists, but this *Gebrauchsmusik* with a vengeance will not ingratiate others. Highly skilled performance. So with the witty little quintet, although these fellows do not match the supple subtlety of their Angel compatriots. Good studio sound. —J.L.

SCHUBERT: *Symphony No. 6 in C*; the Bamberg Symphony Orchestra conducted by Joseph Keilberth. London-Telefunken LGM-65026, \$2.98.

▲HERE is a coupling mess for you. The best performance of this delectable work (Krips) is too

old for serious consideration. The second-best (Sebastian) is paired with the same composer's *Third*. But the *Third* recently turned up on the fourth side of Van Beinum's Bruckner *Eighth*, and then again on the reverse of Markevitch's Mozart No. 34—either one of which is decidedly worth owning. If, like myself, you feel you must have the Bruckner, the only sensible alternative would seem to be the acquisition of this latest *Sixth*, which has the more and more sizable advantage of being coupled with nothing whatsoever. Keilberth is an expert conductor in the olden tradition, less interested in song than in substance, so that his Schubert lacks a certain last measure of lift. But this is a thoroughly workmanlike traversal, none the less, and one that will, I think, endure for quite a while. The sound is all right. —J.L.

PERCUSSION

(Continued from page 132)

reproduction resembling nothing heard in a concert hall. This form of reproduction might appeal to the hi fi fanatic who has never invaded a concert hall and heard a flesh and blood orchestra, and who would be very disappointed if he did. The commentator also seemed stilted and on several occasions one had the feeling that a judiciously placed fire might have livened things a bit.

In spite of these objections the musical and educational values rise above the faults of this disc. And viewed in this light it is still a fine addition to a record library. —G.V.

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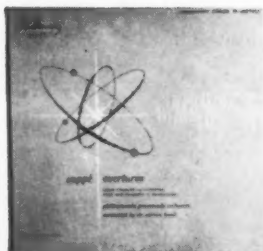
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